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Message Text

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15
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 ACDA-05 AID-05 EB-07

COME-00 AGR-05 /093 W
---------- 032031
O R 301010Z AUG 75
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 963
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC
USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 11791

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IN, US
SUBJECT: THE PRIME MINISTER--SHE LOVES US; SHE LOVES US NOT?

SUMMARY: WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI TAKING THE LEAD, THE INDIANS HAVE MADE A NUMBER OF FAVORABLE GESTURES TOWARD US IN THE PAST MONTH. LEST WE BECOME GIDDY WITH SUCCESS, THERE IS SOME BALANCE AS ALWAYS WITH THE US ON THE RECEIVING END OF SOME SLANDEROUS AT-
TACKS IN THE LOCAL COMMUNIST PRESS, WHICH APPEARS TO CONTINUE TO REMAIN LARGELY UNCHECKED BY CENSORSHIP. THE NET RESULT, HOWEVER,
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IS A POSITIVE TREND IN US-INDIAN RELATIONS, WITH THE INDIANS

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PLAYING THE UNLIKELY ROLE OF SUITOR. THE RATIONALE FOR MRS. GANDHI'S OVERTURES IS UNCLEAR. WE SEE POSSIBLE DOMESTIC FACTORS, BUT ARE INCLINED TO DISCOUNT INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS OTHER THAN INDIAN HOPES OF PREVENTING THE SALE OF SUBSTANTIAL US ARMS TO PAKISTAN. WERE THIS TO TAKE PLACE WE BELIEVE MRS. GANDHI WOULD QUICKLY REVERSE THE PRESENT TREND, AND US-INDIAN RELATIONS WOULD SUFFER ACCORDINGLY.

1. WITH MRS. GANDHI IN THE LEAD, THE GOI HAS MADE A NUMBER OF FAVORABLE GESTURES TOWARD THE UNITED STATES OVER THE PAST MONTH. OFFICIALS TELL US THE WORD HAS COME DOWN TO BE RESPONSIVE IN DEALING WITH THE US.

2. THE RED CARPET WAS ROLLED OUT FOR SENATOR EAGLETON. HE WAS RECEIVED BY THE TOP THREE OFFICIALS IN THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT: MRS. GANDHI, FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN AND DEFENSE MINISTER SWARAN SINGH. IN A RARE GESTURE OF CORDIALITY, MRS. GANDHI CAME TO THE AMBASSADOR'S DINNER FOR CONGRESSMAN CEDERBERG AT ROOSEVELT HOUSE ON AUGUST 24, AND APPEARED TO ENJOY THE EVENING. SHE GAVE INTERVIEWS TO MEET THE PRESS AND THE SATURDAY REVIEW IN ATTEMPTS TO REACH WHAT SHE KNOWS IS A CRITICAL AUDIENCE. IF HER PERFORMANCES WERE INEPT, IT WAS NOT FOR LACK OF EFFORT OR INTENTION. SANJAY GANDHI'S LENGTHY INTERVIEW DESCRIBING HIS ANTI-COMMUNIST, PRO-FREE ENTERPRISE VIEWS COULD POSSIBLY BE SEEN AS REINFORCING THIS EFFORT, ALTHOUGH THE HASTE WITH WHICH THE INTERVIEW WAS MODIFIED AND DOWNPLAYED LEAVES US BEMUSED.

4. IN KEEPING WITH THE INDIAN SCENE, WE ARE ALSO RECEIVING NEGATIVE SIGNALS. DESPITE REPEATED REPRESENTATIONS IN WASHINGTON AND DELHI, THE LEFTIST, PRO-CPI PRESS CONTINUES TO VILLIFY THE US, LABELING US RESPONSIBLE FOR MUJIB'S ASSASSINATION, AND PLOTTING AGAINST THE "INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES" OF SOUTH ASIA. FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN, IN A RECENT INTERVIEW TO AFP AND AGAIN AT THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE IN LIMA, REPEATED HIS SATISFACTION WITH THE "TRIUMPH OF THE FORCES OF LIBERATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM". THE GOI MUST KNOW THAT SIMILAR REMARKS AFTER THE FALL OF SAIGON DID NOT GO OVER WELL IN THE US. MRS GANDHI HERSELF DODGED THE QUESTION OF CIA INTERFERENCE IN INDIA, RESPONDING LAMELY THAT "SOMETIMES THERE ARE PRESENCES WHICH CONFIDENTIAL

CANNOT BE PROVED".

5. AT TIMES LIKE THIS WE SEE OURSELVES PLAYING THE DAISY GAME--SHE LOVES US; SHE LOVES US NOT. IN THIS CASE WE SEE THE TREND AS FAVORABLE. THE SIGNALS FROM THE GOI ARE MORE POSITIVE THAN NEGATIVE, BUT WE NEED NOT YET FEAR THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL HUG US TO DEATH. BUT IF THE TREND IS REASONABLY CLEAR, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SIGNALS IS NOT.

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WHAT SHE HAS DONE IN THE PAST WEEKS IS TENATIVE, AND
SUBJECT TO INSTANT REVERSAL. IF SHE IS PROBING FOR A
RESPONSE, WE ARE NOT SURE WHAT SHE IS SEEKING. SHE WILL
CERTAINLY BE CAREFUL NOT TO JEOPARDIZE HER RELATIONS WITH
THE SOVIETS.

6. WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ON THE RATIONALE BEHIND MRS
GANDHI'S OVERTURES. THERE ARE CONCEIVABLE DOMESTIC
POLITICAL REASONS FOR AN OPENING TOWARD THE UNITED STATES
AT THIS TIME. WE BELIEVE MRS GANDHI DOES NOT WANT TO
BE KNOWN AS THE PRIME MINISTER WHO BETRAYED INDIAN DEMO-
CRACY. WHAT BETTER WAY TO MOLLIFY HER CRITICS AMONG THE
INDIAN LIBERAL INTELLIGENSIA, CONSERVATIVE CONGRESS PARTY
MEMBERS, AND THE WESTERN-ORIENTED BUSINESS COMMUNITY THAN
TO DEMONSTRATE, AT LITTLE COST TO HERSELF, REAL OR APPARENT
IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

7. WE DOUBT THE PRIME MINISTER PERCEIVES SUBSTANTIAL
ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS TO BE GAINED FROM IMPROVED RELATIONS.
SHE DOES NOT OFTEN THINK IN SUCH TERMS, BUT IT MAY BE
HER ADVISORS HAVE STRESSED THE DESIRABILITY OF US INVEST-
MENT AND TRADE IN SELECTED AREAS. SHE MAY ALSO SEE THE
US AS A SOURCE OF CONTINUING FOOD GRAIN EXPORTS AT CON-
CESSIONARY REATES, ALTHOUGH WE DOUBT SHE OR ANYONE
ELSE IN THE GOI SEE US BILATERAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AS
A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR.

8. WE DO NOT SEE MRS GANDHI'S OVERTURES TOWARD THE US
AS PROMPTED BY INCREASED DISSATISFACTION WITH INDIA'S
MOSCOW CONNECTION OR ITS DISTRUST OF PEKING. SO LONG
AS ALL IS REASONABLY STABLE IN RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN
OR PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, INDIA HAS NO REASON TO LEAN
MORE HEAVILY ON THE SOVIET UNION. PEKING HAS GROWLED ABOUT
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SIKKIM, AND THE INDIANS ARE APPREHENSIVE THAT PEKING MAY
GAIN INFLUENCE IN BANGLADESH, BUT TO DATE THERE ARE NO
CHANGES OF THE MAGNITUDE THAT WOULD CAUSE INDIA TO REVISE
ITS FOREIGN POLICY IN ANY SIGNIFICANT WAY. MRS GANDHI
MAY BELIEVE THAT BEING MORE FRIENDLY AT THIS TIME MAY
RESTRAIN THE UNITED STATES FROM SELLING A SIGNIFICANT
AMOUNT OF ARVD TO PAKISTAN, ALTHOUGH HER POLICY MAKERS
HAVE BEEN TOLD REPEATEDLY THAT WE DO NOT INTEND TO DO THIS
ANYWAY.
SAXBE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NEWDE11791
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750301-0316
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975082/aaaaaaye.tel
Line Count: 164
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <29 OCT 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE PRIME MINISTER--SHE LOVES US; SHE LOVES US NOT? SUMMARY: WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI TAKING THE LEAD, THE INDIANS
TAGS: PFOR, IN, US, (GANDHI, INDIRA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006